

PLASTER WORK.

We promised to return to this subject in treating of the matter of Mr. Fair's house last week.

Plaster, hitherto, appears to have been used for all sorts of sham work and mockery. No one seems to think that it has a legitimate province of its own, as much so as the materials it has been employed to imitate. In whatever shape or form we have it applied, it is to affect a character which belongs to something else. One day it disports in "borrowed plumes" and exhibits in a compe front, all the apperalling of stone or marble; another, as a framed ceiling or partition of wood-work—poor frail thing, it affects at one time massiveness and strength, in the shape of the bulky column and pilaster—the truss and cantaliver another time impends over your head, with all the brave aspects of groining and vaulting; a third gaily flaunting it in the variegated hues of precious marble—these we humbly take leave to say are all perversions; plaster work, in all its varied modes of application, has a hundred and a thousand legitimate phases of character, without the necessity of drawing upon one of its allied constituents in the art of building; plaster cornices, plaster columns, plaster ceilings, and plaster walls are all nevertheless allowable, so that they be to all appearance plaster, and used as the dressing and garniture of the structural parts to which they are attached—case the pillar, no matter whether slight or massive, with plaster if you like, but let it appear unequivocally as a casing—in such case there would be no inconsistency—and instantly a right conception of this principle obtains in men's minds. Architectural ornaments as well as architectural structure obtains a wider charter—make your ceilings curved or flat—pannelled or ribbed, as you like, but let the ornaments, if of plaster, be appropriate to plaster—lay on cornices exterior or interior at your fancy, but discard all appearance of the block and mass essential to stone and timber, and where shelter is necessary let it be in a sheltering material; in one word, get rid of the slavish principle of imitation, and plaster-work, papier-maché, wood-work, iron-work, stone-work assume their own proper character and expression,

and become the alphabet as it were of a language as voluble and as beautiful as any thing ever given utterance to in the practice of art in any past time or country.

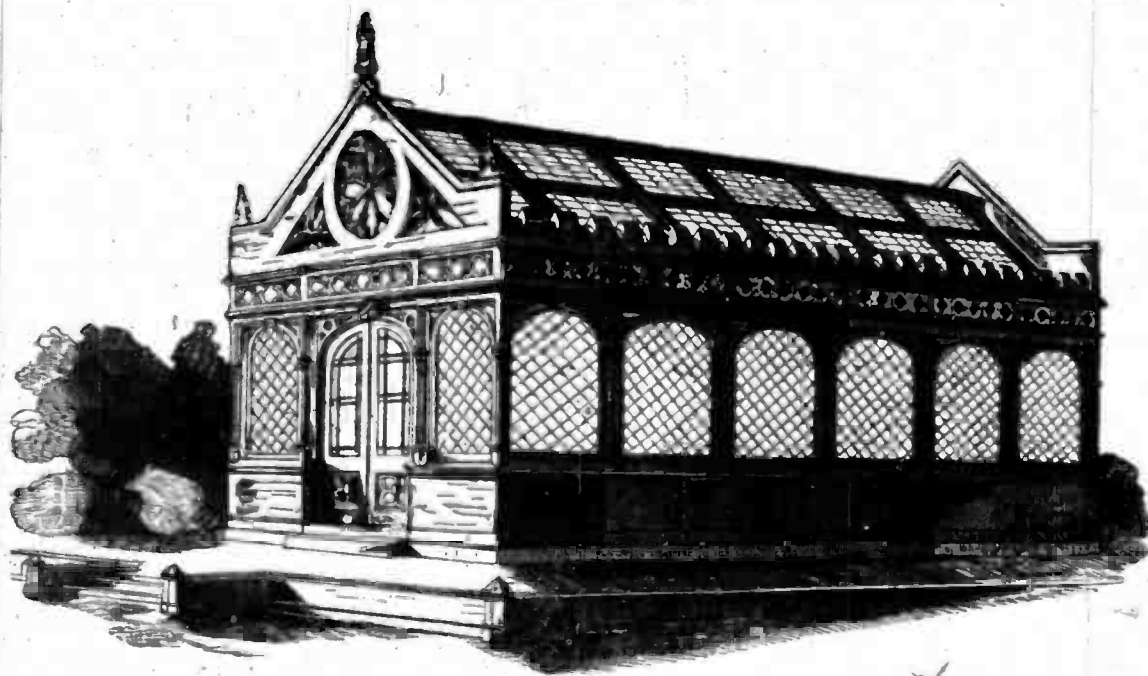
Confining our remarks, however, to plaster work, let us consider what is opened to us on this principle in the way of moulding and of ornament. Attention will be paid not to the shape of the moulding as befitting a marble or timber structure,—no consideration as to the tools employed in those materials, will trammel the hand of the designer; but the question will be, what will look best on principles of artistic truth, and be consistent with the plastic character of the material employed? Lofty and elegant columns may adorn our halls and churches, built in brick if desirable, and plastered over also, with enrichments both of form and colour abounding; but no scoring out to represent stones—no deceptions or falsities. Vaulted or other forms of ceiling, ribs, tracery, pannelings, bosses, pendants, foliations may be lavished on our interiors; but, again, no scoring or jointing to represent stone—no stone mouldings, that is, such mouldings as are bound up with the sole integrity of stone structure—no framings in the fashion of wood-work—no mockery, in fine, of the masons' or the carpenters' art. Let these work up to the desired point in construction, manifesting with their best ability the science of which they are masters; and the beautiful art of fashioning and putting together their materials complete; and let the plasterer follow, with no design to debase, or adulterate, or disguise, or affect, in prejudice to his fellow craftsman in another walk; but to appropriately ornament, to set off if needs be and good taste admit of it. His is the decoration and garnishing, and there is a territory as wide and as extensive for him in this respect, as ever offered to the most elaborate fancy or extravagant imaginings of man.

Many people run away with the idea that there is something insecure and ephemeral in the character of plaster work; so there is if it be exposed to forces and actions for which it is not designed, but we will venture to say that appropriately introduced, whether in the interior or exterior of any structure, it is calculated to endure as long as the most substantial parts; here, however, again the discretion of the

designer has to be exercised in not exposing it to the chance of damaging circumstances. It is, however, pretty well ascertained now, that many of our cements are as durable in their qualities of resistance to atmospheric influences as the majority of our best qualities of stone, and are, indeed, as applicable for many purposes of exterior ornament. We shall return to this subject again.

EAST COWES PARK & BOTANIC GARDEN.

We have a most interesting subject before us, which, if we can so arrange, we shall take up to handle as a text, and as an illustration of what is in our minds the *beau idéal* of this class of villa property. Our object will no doubt apply in two ways, one to bring the speculation, for such we understand it to be, into notice, but our paramount view will be to interest and inform our readers, and to take this as a practical model for all such undertakings. We cannot adopt a better method than to take a matter of fact affair of this sort to dilute upon; it is better than all the imaginary recreations of the fancy. It will teach our builders and proprietors of building-land, a complete lesson from the first mapping of an estate and setting out allotments to the finishing points of house decoration and landscape gardening. We understand that this property is highly favoured by nature to begin with, and that the design of occupying it with buildings and laying it out in separate gardens and grounds has been managed so as not to infringe on its primitive beauty, but rather to add to it by giving the charm of social life in its most attractive forms to be united with those of nature. A botanic garden comprises one portion—the centre of the plan, and this is surrounded by a noble sweep of road and marginal plantings, and beds of flowers of the character that we remember to have seen in the public walks abroad, and for which we were disposed to extol the Germans as being far in advance of us. However, our object will be to make ourselves well acquainted with the subject before we take it in hand, and we think we may promise ourselves and our readers a treat of unusual interest in the subsequent disposal of it.



DESCRIPTION OF GREENHOUSE.

To be built in the gothic style, and capable of containing upwards of 500 plants in pots, also several grape vines. Its extreme length being forty feet, and width, in the clear, sixteen feet, the entrance would be at one end only by folding doors.

It will be erected on a raised path, as shewn on the drawing. I have introduced over the iron sashes an iron frieze with an ornamental cornice and battlement over. The whole of the wood-work outside, together with cornice, to be painted in imitation of stone. The sashes in front to be as lifting shutters, the other sashes in the roof to be hung in the usual manner.

The contract for the above is 253*l.* 10*s.*, and to be completed in six weeks. The mode for heating the same I propose to be by means of hot-water apparatus, with Thompson's boiler, and the estimate for which is 65*l.*, with sufficiency of pipe &c. to be able to command sixty degrees of heat when required.